

Tilburg University

Confining Frailty

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'GRAVE MEN, NEAR DEATH, WHO SEE WITH BLINDING SIGHT
BLIND EYES COULD BLAZE LIKE METEORS AND BE GAY'

DYLAN THOMAS | DO NOT GO GENTLE INTO THAT GOOD NIGHT

CONFINING FRAILITY investigates rituals in rest and nursing homes, with a broad and relational understanding of ritual, as a symbolical action that breaches a functional routine. Employing environmental anthropology, it develops the concept of *ritual zoning*: a way of performing that transcends material surroundings. The author provides detailed ethnographic accounts of two facilities of elderly care in the city of Tilburg, and explains how and why their ritual repertoires differ from other ritual repertoires within present-day society. Being forced compositions of residence and workplace, with colliding ideologies of leisure and functionality, many of their rituals have become 'unbalanced'. *Ritual zoning* is reiterated as a possible means to re-attune these rituals to their material environment and their immaterial ideologies. Moreover, the concept helps to ascertain a new attitude toward old age, the elderly, and the institutions that 'take care' of them when they are no longer capable of doing so themselves.

CONFINING FRAILITY | MARTIJN DE RUIJTER

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CONFINING FRAILITY

MAKING PLACE
FOR RITUAL
IN REST AND
NURSING HOMES

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